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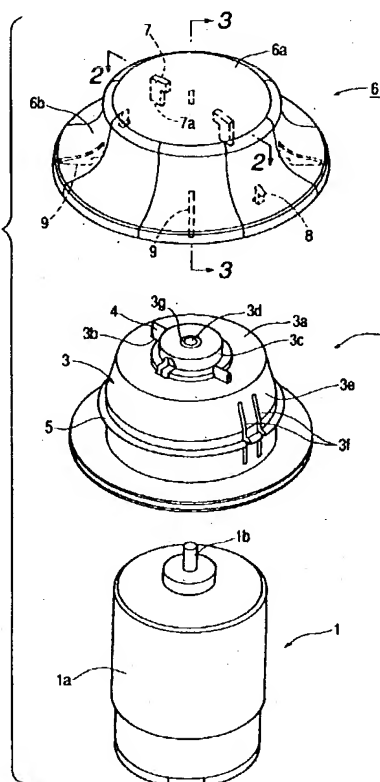
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(57) A fitting member (2) is provided with a base having a flat portion, a stopper (4) protruding forward from the base, and a through hole (36) provided in a flat portion, wherein a knob (6) has a plurality of projections (7) positioned on the same circle. In fitting the knob (6) to the fitting member (2), when the knob (6) is rotated while being pressed backward in a state in which the projections (7) are kept in contact with the flat portion, the projections (7) slice on and in friction with a flat face, and when the projections (7) hit against the stopper (4) and the rotation of the knob (6) is stopped, the projections (7) and the through hole (3b) become opposite each other. After the projections (7) are fitted into the through hole (3b), the knob (6) and the fitting member (2) are enabled to be coupled to each other.

FIG. 1**EP 1 248 177 A1**

Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the invention

[0001] The present invention relates to a fitting structure for knobs particularly suitable for fitting to shaft members of rotation drive members of motors and the like.

2. Description of the Prior art

[0002] To describe a fitting structure for knobs according to the prior art with reference to a drawing, Fig. 6 shows an exploded perspective view of a fitting structure for knobs according to the prior art.

[0003] A rotation drive member 51 consisting of an electric motor has a substantially cylindrical body 51a and a columnar shaft member 51b, such as a rotation shaft or the like, protruding outward from the tip of the body 51a. This shaft member 51b is rotated as prescribed by supplying electric power to the body 51a from a terminal (not shown) and, when no power is supplied to the body 51a, the shaft member 51b has a prescribed revolving torque in either the clockwise or the counter-clockwise direction.

[0004] A fitting member 52 consisting of a synthetic resin member and formed by molding; a base 53; an annular first fitting portion 54 provided on the same circle as the base 53 sharing the center; and a second fitting portion 55 concentric with and having a greater diameter than the first fitting portion 54. The first fitting portion 54 and the second fitting portion 55 are formed in a collar shape, some protruding outward from the center axis of the base 53.

[0005] The base 53 has a front wall 53a formed to be a substantially flat face, and a cylindrical side wall 53b extending backward from the circumference of the front wall 53a. The annular first fitting portion 54 and the second fitting portion 55 are arranged protruding outward from the rear end of the cylindrical side wall 53b.

[0006] The front wall 53a of the base 53 has a round through holes 53c positioned at the center of the front wall 53a.

[0007] A cylindrical member 53d consisting of a metallic material and integrated by insert molding is arranged within the through holes 53c.

[0008] Into the cylindrical member 53d is inserted the shaft member 51b of the rotation drive member 51, and the cylindrical member 53d is fitted to the shaft member 51b with a suitable means such as a screw (not shown). This fitting integrates the fitting member 52 with the shaft member 51b to enable the fitting member 52 to rotate together with the shaft member 51b.

[0009] A knob 56 consisting of a synthetic resin material and formed by molding has a disk-shaped front wall 56a, a cylindrical side wall 56b extending backward

from the circumference of the front wall 56a, a plurality (e.g. four) of hooks 57 protruding inward in the cylindrical side wall 56b and positioned on the same circle, and a plurality (e.g. four) of keep pieces 58 protruding inward within the cylindrical side wall 56b and positioned on the same circle. The hooks 57 and the keep pieces 58 are also positioned on the same circle.

[0010] In a state in which this knob 56 is arranged in front of and to concentrically cover the fitting member 52, each of the hooks 57 of the knob 56 is engaged with the annular first fitting portion 54, and each of the keep pieces 58 is kept in contact with and over the second fitting portion 55 to couple the knob 56 and the fitting member 52.

[0011] This coupling results in arrangement of the side wall 53a of the fitting member 52 within the side wall 56b of the knob 56.

[0012] Next will be described how the conventional knob fitting structure described above is assembled.

[0013] First, the cylindrical member 53d integrated with the fitting member 52 is fitted to the shaft member 51b of the rotation drive member 51.

[0014] Then, the front wall 56a of the knob 56 is arranged over and opposite the front wall 53a of the fitting member 52 to cover the front wall 53a so as to position the side wall 53b of the fitting member 52 within the side wall 56b of the knob 56.

[0015] When the knob 56 in this state is pressed in the direction of the axis of the shaft member 51b, the hooks 57 ride over the top of the first fitting portion 54 and are engaged with the first fitting portion 54, and the keep pieces 58 are arranged in contact with and over the second fitting portion 55.

[0016] The engaging of the hooks 57 with the first fitting portion 54 and the contact of the keep pieces 58 with the second fitting portion 55 cause the knob 56 to be fitted onto the fitting member 52.

[0017] However, the knob fitting structure described above involves the problem that, when the knob 56 is to be fitted to the fitting member 52 by pressing in, if the knob 56 is pressed in a state of being inclined relative to the fitting member 52, the fitting member 52 is shaken to make the knob 56 difficult to be fitted and to make the hooks of the knob 56 to be engaged at the same time, adding to the difficulty of fitting.

[0018] Also the fitting of the knob 56 in a state of being only hooked onto the fitting member 52 invites the problem that the knob 56 slips relative to the fitting members 52.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0019] An object of the present invention is to solve the problems noted above, and provide a fitting structure for knobs that facilitates fitting of the knob to its fitting member.

[0020] A fitting structure for knobs according to the invention is provided with a fitting member fitted to a shaft

member and a knob arranged concentrically with the fitting member and fitted to a front face of the fitting member, wherein the fitting member has a base having a flat portion, a stopper protruding forward from the base, and a through hole provided in the flat portion, the knob has a plurality of projections positioned on the same circle, and in fitting the knob to the fitting member, when the knob is rotated while being pressed backward in a state in which the projections are kept in contact with the flat portion, the projections slide on and in contact with the flat portion and when the projections hit against the stopper and the rotation of the knob is stopped, the projections and the through hole become opposite each other to enable the knob and the fitting member to be coupled to each other after the projections are fitted into the through hole.

[0021] As this configuration enables the knob to be readily and reliably positioned relative to the fitting member, the fitting is simplified, resulting in a knob fitting structure in which, even if the knob is pressed in a state in which it is inclined relative to the fitting member, the projections enable the knob to be kept in a normal state by the flat portion and reliable coupling of the knob and the fitting member with no fear of slipping of the knob can be ensured.

[0022] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the base has a cylinder protruding forward in its central part, and the projections perform rotary actions with the cylinder as a guide.

[0023] This configuration, in which rotary actions are performed with the cylinder as a guide, can provide a knob fitting structure enabling the knob and the fitting member to be reliably coupled while the knob is maintained in an even more normal state.

[0024] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the through hole is formed adjacent to the stopper.

[0025] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure ensuring reliable and easy positioning of the knob, simple and inexpensive assembling, and freedom from slips and excess play of the knob.

[0026] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, a plurality of the stoppers and the through holes are provided.

[0027] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure ensuring well balanced, stable and reliable fitting of the knob to the fitting member.

[0028] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the base of the fitting member has an annular fitting portion on the same circle, the knob has a plurality of hooks on the same circle, and the hooks of the knob are engaged with the fitting portion of the fitting member to couple the knob and the fitting member to each other.

[0029] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure that facilitates fitting of the knob to the fitting member and ensures reliable fitting.

[0030] In the fitting structure for knobs according to

the invention, the knob may have a plurality of keep pieces arranged on the same circle, each of the keep pieces may be positioned between the hooks of the knob, and each of the keep pieces is kept in contact with the fitting portion of the fitting member.

[0031] This configuration, as the knob is kept in contact with the fitting portion of the fitting member by the keep pieces, can provide a knob fitting structure in which the knob can be stably fitted to the fitting member.

[0032] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, a position in which the fitting portion of the fitting member is engaged with the hooks of the knob is farther outward in a radial direction than a position in which the projections of the knob are fitted into the through hole of the fitting member.

[0033] This configuration, wherein the knob is engaged with the fitting member in a position having a greater diameter than the projections of the knob, can provide a knob fitting structure in which the knob can be stably engaged.

[0034] The fitting structure for knobs according to the invention is further provided with a rotation drive member of which the shaft member is rotatable, wherein the fitting member is fitted to the shaft member.

[0035] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure enabling rotary action of the knob to achieve its normal coupling to the fitting member.

[0036] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the rotation drive member comprises a motor.

[0037] This configuration can provide a less costly knob fitting structure as its rotation drive member comprises a motor of a simple structure.

[0038] A fitting structure for knobs according to the invention is provided with a fitting member fitted to a shaft member and a knob arranged concentrically with the fitting member and fitted to a front face of the fitting member, wherein the fitting member has a base, a plurality of arcwise guides protruding forward from the base and provided on the same circle, gaps each provided between adjacent guides, and guide faces each provided at a top of one or another of the guides and inclined relative to the base, the knob has a plurality of projections positioned on the same circle, and in fitting the knob to the fitting member, when the knob is pressed backward in a state in which the projections are kept in contact with the guide faces, the projections are guided on the guide faces, the knob or the fitting member is rotated so as to enable the projections to approach the base and, after the projections are positioned in the gaps, the knob and the fitting member are enabled to be coupled to each other.

[0039] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure which is easy to fit because the knob can be readily and reliably positioned relative to the fitting member and, even if the knob is pressed in a state in which it is inclined relative to the fitting member, the projections enable the knob to be kept in a normal state by the

guides and reliable coupling of the knob and the fitting member can be ensured.

[0040] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the projections of the knob are held between adjacent ones of the guides of the fitting member.

[0041] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure ensuring easy positioning of the knob relative to the fitting member, simple and inexpensive assembling, and freedom from slips of the knob.

[0042] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the fitting member is provided with through holes bored in the parts of the base positioned between the gaps, and the projections of the knob are fitted into the through holes.

[0043] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure ensuring even more reliable and easy positioning of the knob, simple and inexpensive assembling, and freedom from slips and excess play of the knob.

[0044] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the projections of the knob are arranged to form a cross.

[0045] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure in which the projections are arranged in a well balanced way, and therefore stable and reliable fitting of the knob to the fitting member is ensured.

[0046] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the guide faces, inclined in the same direction relative to the base, are formed at the tops of the plurality of guides of the fitting member.

[0047] This configuration, because the guide faces therein are inclined in the same direction, can provide a knob fitting structure that is simply and inexpensively configured.

[0048] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the base of the fitting member has an annular fitting portion on the same circle, the knob has a plurality of hooks on the same circle, and the hooks of the knob are engaged with the fitting portion of the fitting member to couple the knob and the fitting member to each other.

[0049] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure enabling the knob to be easily and reliably fitted to the fitting member.

[0050] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the knob has a plurality of keep pieces arranged on the same circle, each of the keep pieces is positioned between the hooks of the knob, and each of the keep pieces is kept in contact with the fitting portion of the fitting member.

[0051] This configuration, as the knob is kept in contact with the fitting portion of the fitting member by the keep pieces, can provide a knob fitting structure in which the knob can be stably fitted to the fitting member.

[0052] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, a position in which the fitting portion of the fitting member is engaged with the hooks of the knob is farther outward in a radial direction than a position in which the projections of the knob are arranged in the

gaps.

[0053] This configuration, wherein the knob is engaged with the fitting member in a position having a greater diameter than the projections of the knob, can provide a knob fitting structure in which the knob can be stably engaged.

[0054] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the base of the fitting member may have a front wall and a cylindrical side wall extending backward from a circumference of the front wall, the front wall is provided with the guides protruding forward, the knob has a front wall and a cylindrical side wall extending backward from the circumference of the front wall, the front wall of the knob is fitted with the projections protruding backward in a state of being positioned in the cylindrical side wall, and the side wall of the fitting member is positioned within the side wall of the knob.

[0055] This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure permitting ready positioning of the knob relative to the fitting member and excelling in assembling ease.

[0056] The fitting structure for knobs according to the invention is further provided with a rotation drive member of which the shaft member is rotatable, wherein the fitting member is fitted to the shaft member, and the fitting member rotates together with the shaft member when the knob is fitted.

[0057] This configuration provides a knob fitting structure allowing the knob to readily fitted to the fitting member fitted to the rotating shaft member and permitting normal coupling of the knob to the fitting member by pressing the knob in.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0058]

Fig. 1 shows an exploded perspective view of a fitting structure for knobs in a first mode of implementing the present invention.

Fig. 2 shows a section of a knob and a fitting member pertaining to the knob fitting structure along line 2-2 in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 shows a section of the knob and the fitting member pertaining to the knob fitting structure along line 3-3 in Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 shows an exploded perspective view of a fitting structure for knobs in a second mode of implementing the invention.

Fig. 5 shows a section of a knob and a fitting member pertaining to the knob fitting structure in the second mode of implementing the invention.

Fig. 6 shows an exploded perspective view of a fitting structure for knobs according to the prior art.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0059] A fitting structure for knobs embodying the present invention in a first embodiment will be described below. Fig. 1 shows an exploded perspective view of a fitting structure for knobs in a first mode of implementing the invention; Fig. 2; a section of a knob and a fitting member pertaining to the knob fitting structure along line 2-2 in Fig. 1; and Fig. 3, a section of the knob and the fitting member pertaining to the knob fitting structure along line 3-3 in Fig. 1.

[0060] A rotation drive member 1 consisting of an electric motor has a substantially cylindrical body 1a and a shaft member 1b such as a columnar rotation shaft protruding outward from the tip of the body 1a. This shaft member 1b is rotated as prescribed by supplying electric power to the body 1a from a terminal (not shown) and, when no power is supplied to the body 1a, the shaft member 1b is configured to have a prescribed revolving torque in either the clockwise or the counter-clockwise direction.

[0061] A fitting member 2 consisting of a synthetic resin material and formed by molding has a base 3, a plurality of (e.g. two) stoppers 4 protruding forward from the base 3 and provided on the same circle as the base 3 sharing the center, and an annular fitting portion 5 provided on the same circle as the base 3 sharing the center.

[0062] The base 3 has a round flat portion 3a, a plurality of (e.g. two) first rectangular through holes 3b provided on a straight line passing the center of the flat portion 3a, a cylinder 3c protruding forward in the central part of the flat portion 3a of the base 3, a round second through holes 3d provided in the central part of the cylinder 3c, and a cylindrical side wall 3e extending backward from the circumference the flat portion 3a with its diameter expanding as it extends. The stoppers 4 and the first through holes 3b are formed on or in the flat portion 3a, and the first through holes 3b are formed adjoining the stoppers 4.

[0063] The fitting portion 5 is formed in a collar shape protruding outward from the side wall 3e of the base 3, and two grooves 3f are formed, spanning these fitting portion 5 and side wall 3e, in a direction parallel to the axis of the base 3 and in opposite positions in the base 3.

[0064] A cylindrical member 3g consisting of a metallic material and integrated by insert molding is arranged within the second through holes 3d.

[0065] Into the cylindrical member 3g is inserted the shaft member 1b of the rotation drive member 1, and the cylindrical member 3g is fitted to the shaft member 1b with a suitable means such as a screw (not shown). This fitting integrates the fitting member 2 with the shaft member 1b to enable the fitting member 2 to rotate together with the shaft member 1b.

[0066] A knob 6 consisting of a synthetic resin material and formed by molding has a round front wall 6a; a

cylindrical side wall 6b extending backward from the circumference of the front wall 6a with its diameter expanding as it extends; a plurality (e.g. two) of projections 7 protruding backward (inward) in a state in which they are positioned within the side wall 6b of the front wall 6a and on the same circle; a plurality (e.g. two) of hooks 8 protruding inward within the cylindrical side wall 6b and positioned on the same circle; and a plurality (e.g. four) of keep pieces 9 protruding inward within the cylindrical side wall 6b and positioned on the same circle. The hooks 8 and the keep pieces 9 are positioned on the same circle, and the keep pieces 9 are arranged between the hooks 8.

[0067] Further, a plurality (e.g. two) of projections 7 are arranged on a straight line passing the center axis, namely at equal intervals of 180 degrees each, and each of these projections 7 has an L overall shape, whose top 7a is formed in an arc shape.

[0068] The plurality (e.g. two) of hooks 8 are positioned farther outward in the radial direction than the projections 7 are and on the same straight line as the positions in which the projections 7 are arranged.

[0069] The plurality (e.g. four) of keep pieces 9 are positioned farther outward in the radial direction than the projections 7 are and between the hooks 8 to form a cross.

[0070] In a state in which this knob 6 is arranged in front of and to concentrically cover the fitting member 2, the tops 7a of the projections 7 are fitted into the first through holes 3b, and the hooks 8 of the knob 6 are engaged with the fitting portion 5 of the fitting member 2, while the keep pieces 9 are kept in contact with and over the fitting portion 5 to fit the knob 6 and the fitting member 2 coupled to each other.

[0071] This coupling results in positioning of the base 3 of the fitting member 2 within the side wall 6b of the knob 6.

[0072] Next will be described how the above-described knob fitting structure in the first embodiment of the invention is assembled.

[0073] First, the cylindrical member 3g integrated with the fitting member 2 is fitted to the shaft member 1b of the rotation drive member 1.

[0074] Then, when the knob 6 is turned with the tops 7a of the projections 7 projecting backward (inward) from the front wall 6a of the knob 6 kept in contact with the flat portion 3a of the base 3 of the fitting member 2, the projections 7 turn, guided by the outer circumference of the cylinder 3c. This regulates the position of the knob 6 in a normal state relative to the fitting member 2.

[0075] Thus, as the knob 6 is turned clockwise, for instance, while being pressed in the axial direction of the shaft member 1b (backward), the projections 7 slide over the flat face 3a in frictional contact with it, and hit against the stoppers 4 to stop the rotation of the knob 6.

[0076] Then, when this knob 6 is stopped, the projections 7 and the first through holes 3b are opposite each other, the knob 6 shifts in the axial direction (backward),

and the projections 7 are fitted into the first through holes 3b.

[0077] At the same time as this fitting of the projections 7 into the first through holes 3b, the hooks 8 are engaged with the fitting portion 5 of the fitting member 2, and the keep pieces 9 are kept in contact with the fitting portion 5.

[0078] The engaging of the fitting portion 5 with the hooks 8 and the fitting of the tops 7a of the projections 7 into the first through holes 3b cause the knob 6 and the fitting member 2 to be coupled to each other.

[0079] Incidentally, although the projections of the knob are arranged on the same straight line in the first preferred embodiment of the invention described above, the appropriate arrangement is not limited to this, but it is adequate for one, three or more projections to be arranged in a prescribed position or positions, and one or more through holes formed opposite the projection or projections in the fitting member.

[0080] Further, while the rotation drive member having a shaft member consists of a motor in the first embodiment described above, the appropriate configuration is not limited to this, but the rotation drive member may consist of a rotary electrical part or mechanical part, such as an encoder.

[0081] Next, a fitting structure for knobs embodying the present invention in a second embodiment will be described below. Fig. 4 shows an exploded perspective view of a fitting structure for knobs in a second mode of implementing the invention, and Fig. 5, a section of a knob and a fitting member pertaining to the knob fitting structure shown in Fig. 4. The same constituent parts as in the first mode of implementing the invention are assigned respectively the same reference signs, and their description is dispensed with.

[0082] A fitting member 20 consisting of a synthetic resin material and formed by molding has a base 21; a plurality (e.g. eight) of arcwise guides 22 provided on the same circle as the base 21 sharing the center; a plurality (e.g. eight) of gaps 23 each provided adjoining guides 22; guide faces 22a each provided at the top of a guide 22; an annular first fitting portion 24 provided on the same circle as the base 21 sharing the center; and a second fitting portion 24a on the same circle as the first fitting portion 24 and having a greater diameter than the first fitting portion 24. The first fitting portion 24 and the second fitting portion 24a are formed in a collar shape protruding outward from the central axis of the base 21.

[0083] The base 21 has a front wall 21a formed to be a substantially flat face, and a cylindrical side wall 21b extending backward from the circumference of the front wall 21a, and to the front wall 21a are fitted the plurality of arcwise guides 22 protruding forward. The annular first fitting portion 24 and the second fitting portion 24a are arranged protruding outward from the rear end of the cylindrical side wall 21b.

[0084] The guide faces 22a of the guides 22 are in-

clined in the same direction relative to the front wall 21a of the base 21.

[0085] The front wall 21a of the base 21 has a plurality (e.g. eight) of rectangular first through holes 21c positioned between the gaps 23 and a round second through 21d position at the center of the front wall 21a.

[0086] Further, a cylindrical member 21e consisting of a metallic material and integrated by insert molding is arranged within the second through holes 21d.

[0087] Into the cylindrical member 21e is inserted the shaft member 1b of the rotation drive member 1, which is fitted to the cylindrical member 21e or the shaft member 1b with a suitable means such as a screw (not shown). This fitting integrates the fitting member 20 with the shaft member 1b to enable the fitting member 20 to rotate together with the shaft member 1b.

[0088] A knob 25 consisting of a synthetic resin material and formed by molding has a round front wall 25a; a cylindrical side wall 25b extending backward from the circumference of the front wall 25a with its diameter expanding as it extends; a plurality (e.g. four) of projections 26 protruding backward (inward) in a state in which they are positioned within the side wall 25b of the front wall 25a and on the same circle; a plurality (e.g. four) of hooks 27 protruding inward within the cylindrical side wall 25b and positioned on the same circle; and a plurality (e.g. four) of keep pieces 28 protruding inward within the cylindrical side wall 25b and positioned on the same circle. The hooks 27 and the keep pieces 28 are positioned on the same circle, and the keep pieces 28 are arranged between the hooks 27.

[0089] Further, a plurality (e.g. four) of projections 26 are arranged to form a cross, namely at equal intervals of 90 degrees each, and each of these projections 26 has an L overall shape, whose top 26a is formed in an arc shape.

[0090] The plurality (e.g. four) of hooks 27 are positioned farther outward in the radial direction than the projections 26 are and on the same straight line as the positions in which the projections 26 are arranged to form a cross.

[0091] The plurality (e.g. four) of keep pieces 28 are positioned farther outward in the radial direction than the projections 26 are and between the hooks 27 to form a cross.

[0092] In a state in which this knob 25 is arranged in front of and to concentrically cover the fitting member 20, the projections 26 of the knob 25 are positioned in the gaps 23 of the fitting member 20, and the tops 26a of the projections 26 are fitted into the first through holes 21c.

[0093] The hooks 27 of the knob 25 are engaged with the annular first fitting portion 24, and the keep pieces 28 are kept in contact with and over the second fitting portion 24a to couple the knob 25 and the fitting member 20 to each other.

[0094] This coupling results in positioning of the side wall 21b of the fitting member 20 within the side wall 25b

of the knob 25.

[0095] Next will be described how the above-described knob fitting structure in the second mode of implementing the invention is assembled.

[0096] First, the cylindrical member 21e integrated with the fitting member 20 is fitted to the shaft member 1b of the rotation drive member 1.

[0097] Then, the tops 26a of the projections 26 projecting backward (inward) from the front wall 25a of the knob 25 are brought into contact with the guide faces 22a of the guides 22 of the fitting member 20. This regulates the position of the knob 25 in a normal state relative to the fitting member 20.

[0098] Then, as the knob 25 is pressed in the axial direction of the shaft member 1b, the tops 26a of the projections 26 are pressed against the inclined guide faces 22a, resulting in, for instance, clockwise turning of the fitting member 20 and shifting of the tops 26a to the positions of the gaps 23 of the fitting member 20. That is, the shaft member 1b is rotated by pressing the knob 25 in the axial direction.

[0099] The rotations of the shaft member 1b and the fitting member 20 cause the knob 25 to shift in the axial direction, the projections 26 to be positioned so as to be caught in the gaps 23, and the tops 26a to be fitted into the first through holes 21c between the gaps 23.

[0100] At the same time as this fitting of the projections 26 into the first through holes 21c, the hooks 27 of the knob 25 are engaged with the fitting portion 24 of the first fitting member 20, and the keep pieces 28 are kept in contact with the second fitting portion 24a.

[0101] The engaging of the first fitting portion 24 with the hooks 27 and the fitting of the tops 26a of the projections 26 into the first through holes 21c cause the knob 25 and the fitting member 20 to be coupled to each other.

[0102] Incidentally, although through holes are provided in the parts of the base positioned between the gaps in the second preferred embodiment of the invention described above, the through holes can be dispensed with.

[0103] Further, although the projections of the knob are arranged to form a cross in the above-described second embodiment of the invention, the appropriate arrangement is not limited to this, but it is adequate for one, two or more projections to be arranged in a prescribed position or positions.

[0104] Also, although the guide faces of the guides are inclined in one direction relative to the base in the above-described second embodiment, the appropriate arrangement is not limited to this, but it is adequate to incline the guide faces alternately in different directions.

[0105] Further, although the rotation drive member having a shaft member is a motor in the above-described second embodiment, the appropriate rotation drive member is not limited to this, but may as well be a rotary mechanical part or electrical part.

[0106] As hitherto described, in the fitting structure for

knobs according to the invention, a fitting member has a base having a flat portion, stoppers protruding forward from the base, and through holes provided in the flat portion; the knob has a plurality of projections positioned on the same circle; and in fitting the knob to the fitting member, when the knob is rotated while being pressed backward in a state in which the projections are kept in contact with the flat portion, the projections slide on and in contact with the flat portion, and when the projections hit against the stoppers and the rotation of the knob is stopped, the projections and the through holes become opposite each other to enable the knob and the fitting member to be coupled to each other after the projections are fitted into the through hole. As this arrangement enables the knob to be readily and reliably positioned relative to the fitting member, the fitting is simplified, resulting in a knob fitting structure in which, even if the knob is pressed in a state in which it is inclined relative to the fitting member, the projections enable the knob to be kept in a normal state by the flat portion and reliable coupling of the knob and the fitting member can be ensured.

[0107] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the base may have a cylinder protruding forward in its central part, and the projections perform rotary actions with the cylinder as guide. This configuration, in which rotary actions are performed with the cylinder as a guide, can provide a knob fitting structure enabling the knob and the fitting member to be reliably coupled while the knob is maintained in an even more normal state.

[0108] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the base of the fitting member may have an annular fitting portion on the same circle, the knob has a plurality of hooks on the same circle, and the hooks of the knob are engaged with the fitting portion of the fitting member to couple the knob and the fitting member to each other. This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure that facilitates fitting of the knob to the fitting member and ensures reliable fitting.

[0109] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the position in which the fitting portion of the fitting member is engaged with the hooks of the knob may be farther outward in the radial direction than the position in which the projections of the knob are fitted into the through hole of the fitting member. This configuration, wherein the knob is engaged with the fitting member in a position having a greater diameter than the projections, can provide a knob fitting structure in which the knob can be stably engaged.

[0110] As described above, in the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the fitting member has a base, a plurality of guides protruding forward from the base, gaps each provided between adjacent guides, and guide faces each provided at the top of one or another of the guides and inclined relative to the base, wherein the knob has a plurality of projections positioned, and in fitting the knob to the fitting member, when the knob is pressed backward in a state in which the

projections are kept in contact with the guide faces, the projections are guided on the guide faces, the knob or the fitting member is rotated so as to enable the projections to approach the base and, after the projections are positioned in the gaps, the knob and the fitting member are enabled to be coupled to each other. This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure which is easy to fit because the knob can be readily and reliably positioned relative to the fitting member.

[0111] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the fitting member may be provided with through holes bored in the parts of the base positioned between the gaps, and the projections of the knob are fitted into the through holes. This configuration can provide a knob fitting structure ensuring even more reliable and easy positioning of the knob, simple and inexpensive assembling, and freedom from slips and excess play of the knob.

[0112] In the fitting structure for knobs according to the invention, the guide faces, inclined in the same direction relative to the base, may be formed at the tops of the plurality of guides of the fitting member. This configuration, because the guide faces therein are inclined in the same direction, can provide a knob fitting structure that is simply and inexpensively configured.

Claims

1. A fitting structure for knobs provided with a fitting member fitted to a shaft member and a knob arranged concentrically with the fitting member and fitted to a front face of the fitting member, wherein the fitting member has a base having a flat portion, a stopper protruding forward from the base, and a through hole provided in the flat portion, wherein the knob has a plurality of projections positioned on the same circle, and wherein in fitting the knob to the fitting member, when the knob is rotated while being pressed backward in a state in which the projections are kept in contact with the flat portion, the projections slide on and in contact with the flat portion and when the projections hit against the stopper and the rotation of the knob is stopped, the projections and the through hole become opposite each other to enable the knob and the fitting member to be coupled to each other after the projections are fitted into the through hole.
2. The fitting structure for knobs according to Claim 1, wherein the base has a cylinder protruding forward in its central part, and wherein the projections perform rotary actions with the cylinder as a guide.
3. The fitting structure for knobs according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the through hole is formed adjacent to the stopper.
4. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 1 to 3, wherein a plurality of the stoppers and the through holes are provided.
5. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 1 to 4, further provided with a rotation drive member of which the shaft member is rotatable, wherein the fitting member is fitted to the shaft member.
6. A fitting structure for knobs provided with a fitting member fitted to a shaft member and a knob arranged concentrically with the fitting member and fitted to a front face of the fitting member, wherein the fitting member has a base, a plurality of arcwise guides protruding forward from the base and provided on the same circle, gaps each provided between adjacent ones of the guides, and guide faces each provided at a top of one or another of the guides and inclined relative to the base, wherein the knob has a plurality of projections positioned on the same circle, and wherein in fitting the knob to the fitting member, when the knob is pressed backward in a state in which the projections are kept in contact with the guide faces, the projections are guided on the guide faces, the knob or the fitting member is rotated so as to enable the projections to approach the base and, after the projections are positioned in the gaps, the knob and the fitting member are enabled to be coupled to each other.
7. The fitting structure for knobs according to Claim 6, wherein the projections of the knob are held between adjacent ones of the guides of the fitting member.
8. The fitting structure for knobs according to Claim 6 or 7, wherein the fitting member is provided with through holes bored in the parts of the base positioned between the gaps, and wherein the projections of the knob are fitted into the through holes.
9. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 6 to 8, wherein the projections of the knob are arranged to form a cross.
10. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 6 to 9, wherein the guide faces, inclined in the same direction relative to the base, are formed at the tops of the plurality of guides of the fitting member.
11. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 6 to 10, wherein the base of the fitting member has a front wall and a cylindrical side wall extending backward from a circumference of the front wall, wherein the front wall is provided with the guides protruding forward, wherein the knob has a

front wall and a cylindrical side wall extending backward from the circumference of the front wall, wherein the front wall of the knob is fitted with the projections protruding backward in a state of being positioned in the cylindrical side wall, and wherein the side wall of the fitting member is positioned within the side wall of the knob. 5

12. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 6 to 11, further provided with a rotation drive member of which the shaft member is rotatable, wherein the fitting member is fitted to the shaft member, and wherein the fitting member rotates together with the shaft member when the knob is fitted. 10 15
13. The fitting structure for knobs according to Claim 5 or 13, wherein the rotation drive member comprises a motor. 20
14. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 1 to 13, wherein the base of the fitting member has an annular fitting portion on the same circle, wherein the knob has a plurality of hooks on the same circle, and wherein the hooks of the knob are engaged with the fitting portion of the fitting member to couple the knob and the fitting member to each other. 25
15. The fitting structure for knobs according to Claim 14, wherein the knob has a plurality of keep pieces arranged on the same circle, wherein each of the keep pieces is positioned between the hooks of the knob, and wherein each of the keep pieces is kept in contact with the fitting portion of the fitting member. 30 35
16. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 1 to 5 in combination with Claim 14 or 15, wherein a position in which the fitting portion of the fitting member is engaged with the hooks of the knob is farther outward in a radial direction than a position in which the projections of the knob are fitted into the through hole of the fitting member. 40 45
17. The fitting structure for knobs according to any of Claims 6 to 13 in combination with Claim 14 or 15, wherein a position in which the fitting portion of the fitting member is engaged with the hooks of the knob is farther outward in a radial direction than a position in which the projections of the knob are arranged in the gaps. 50

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FIG. 1

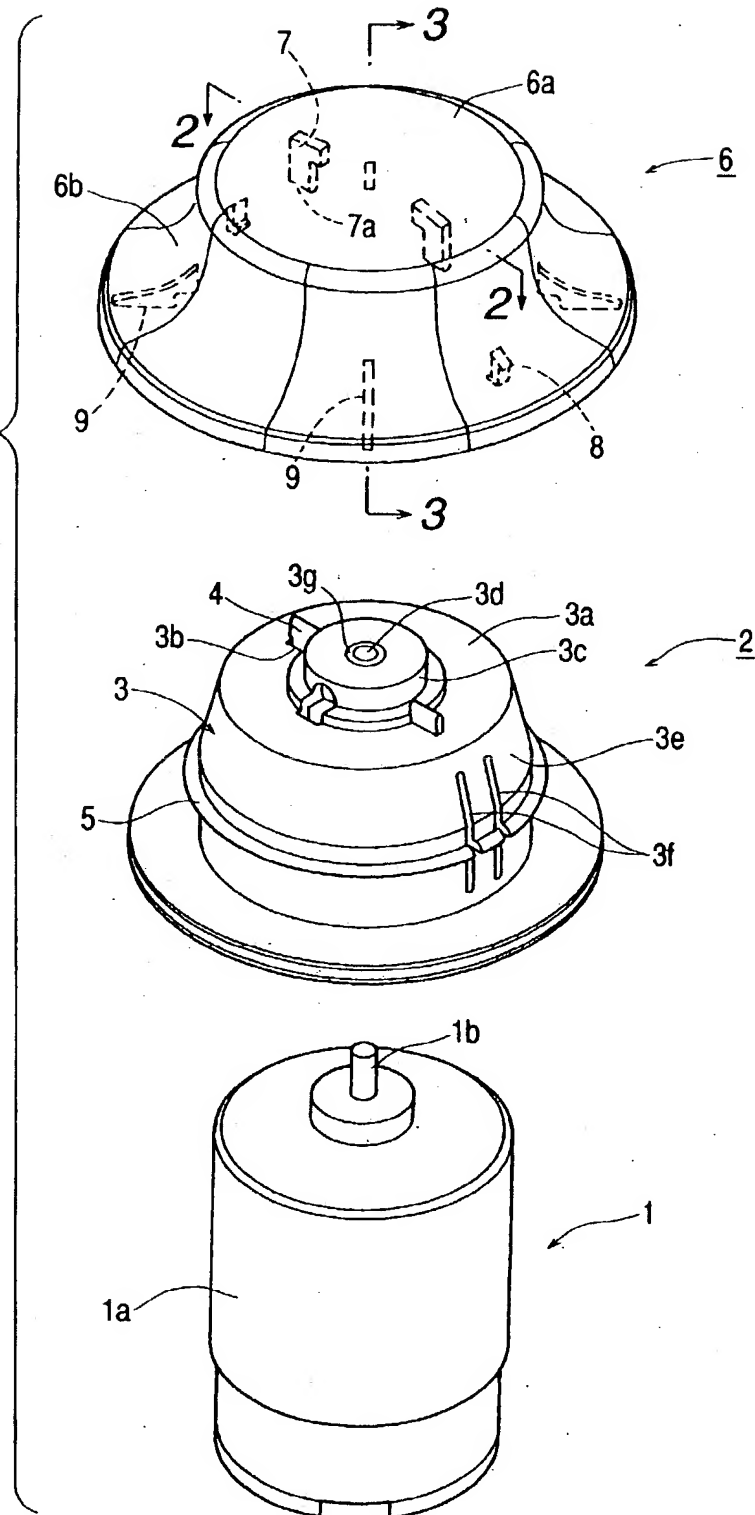


FIG. 2

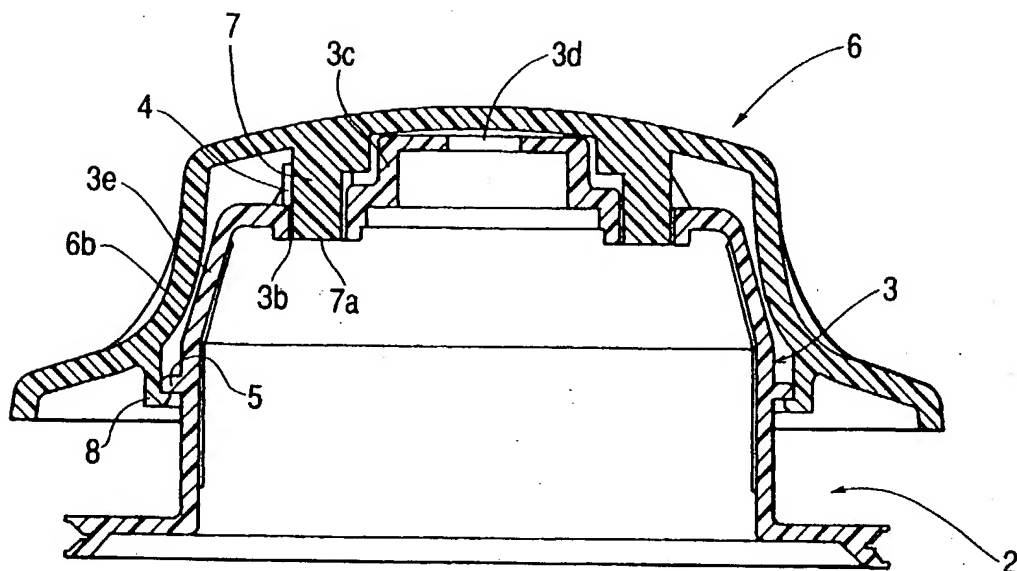


FIG. 3

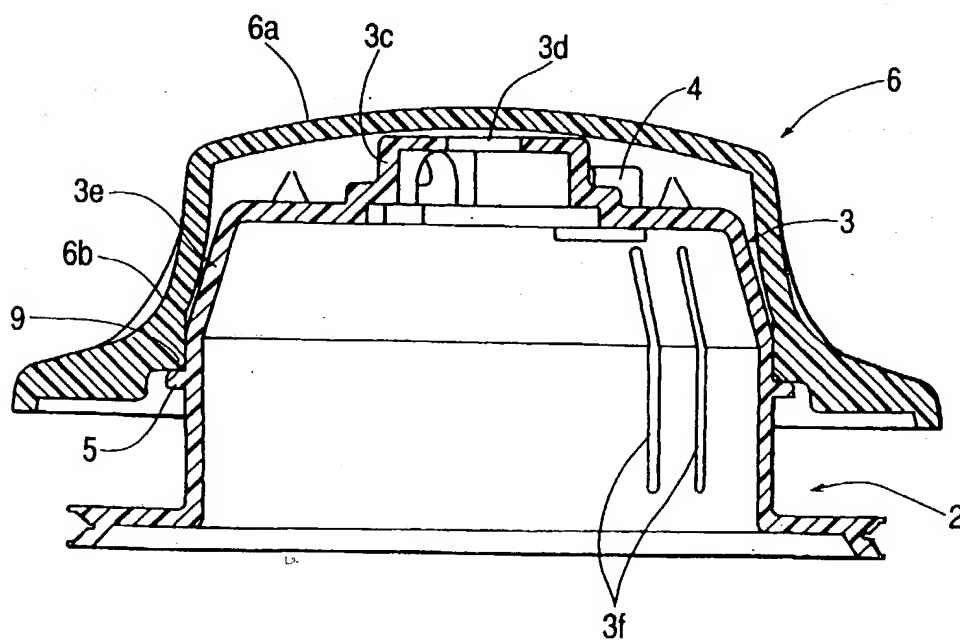


FIG. 4

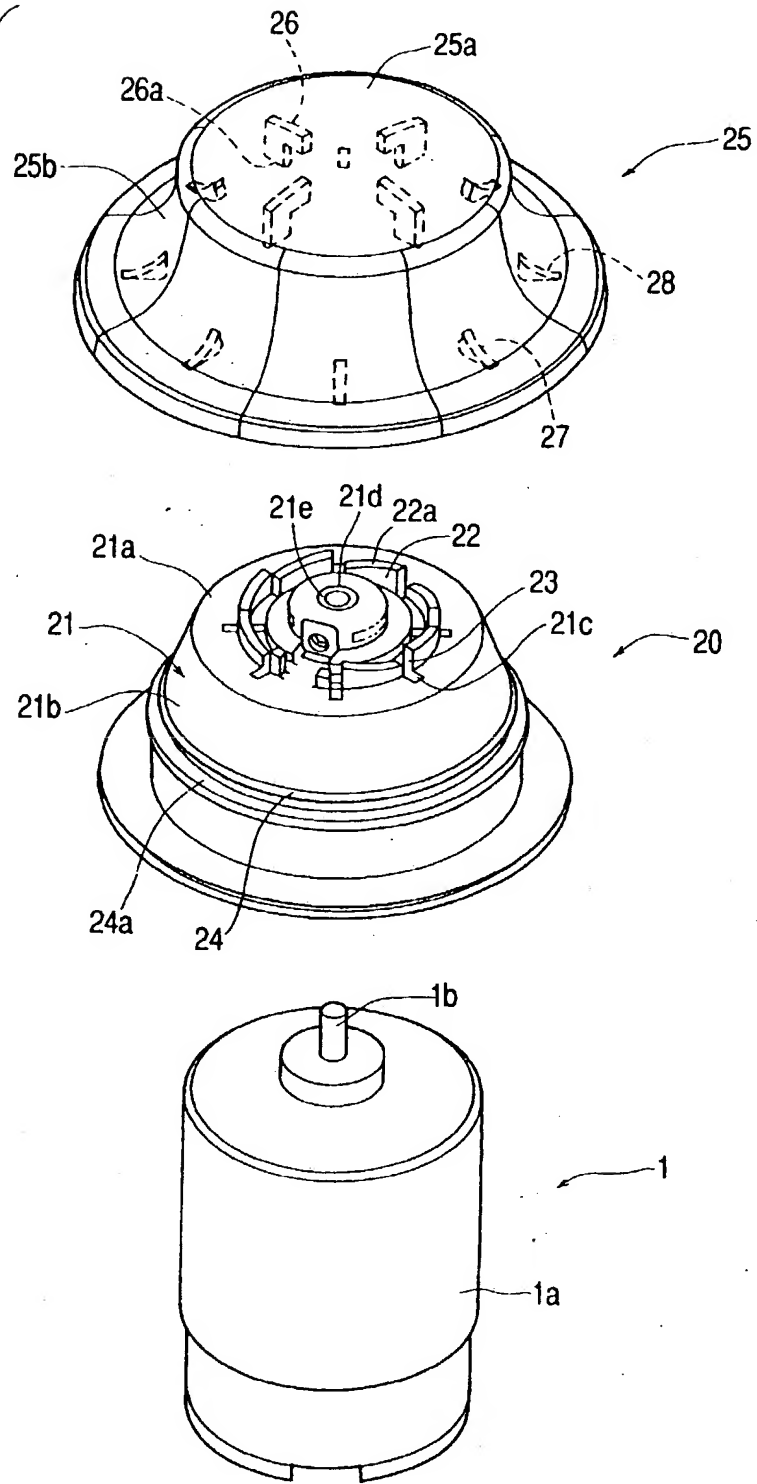


FIG. 5

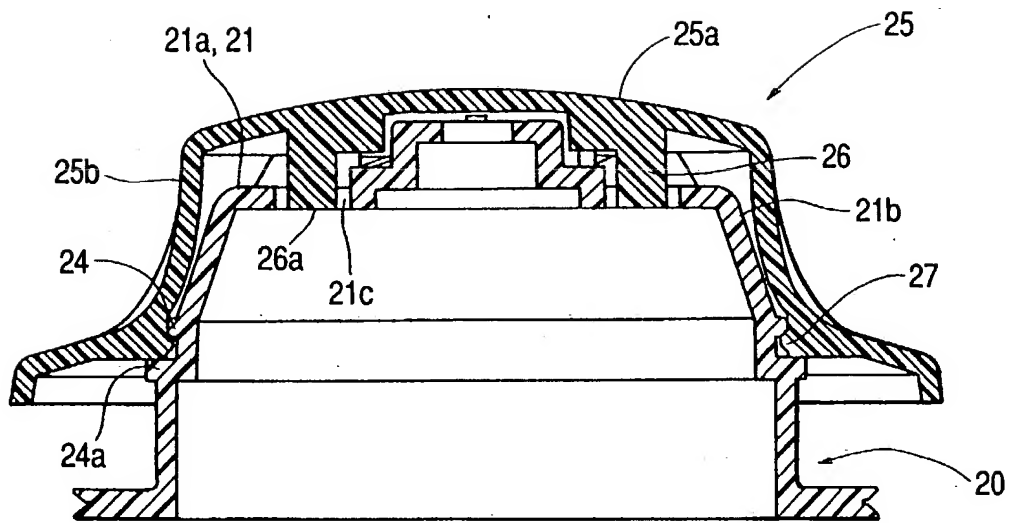
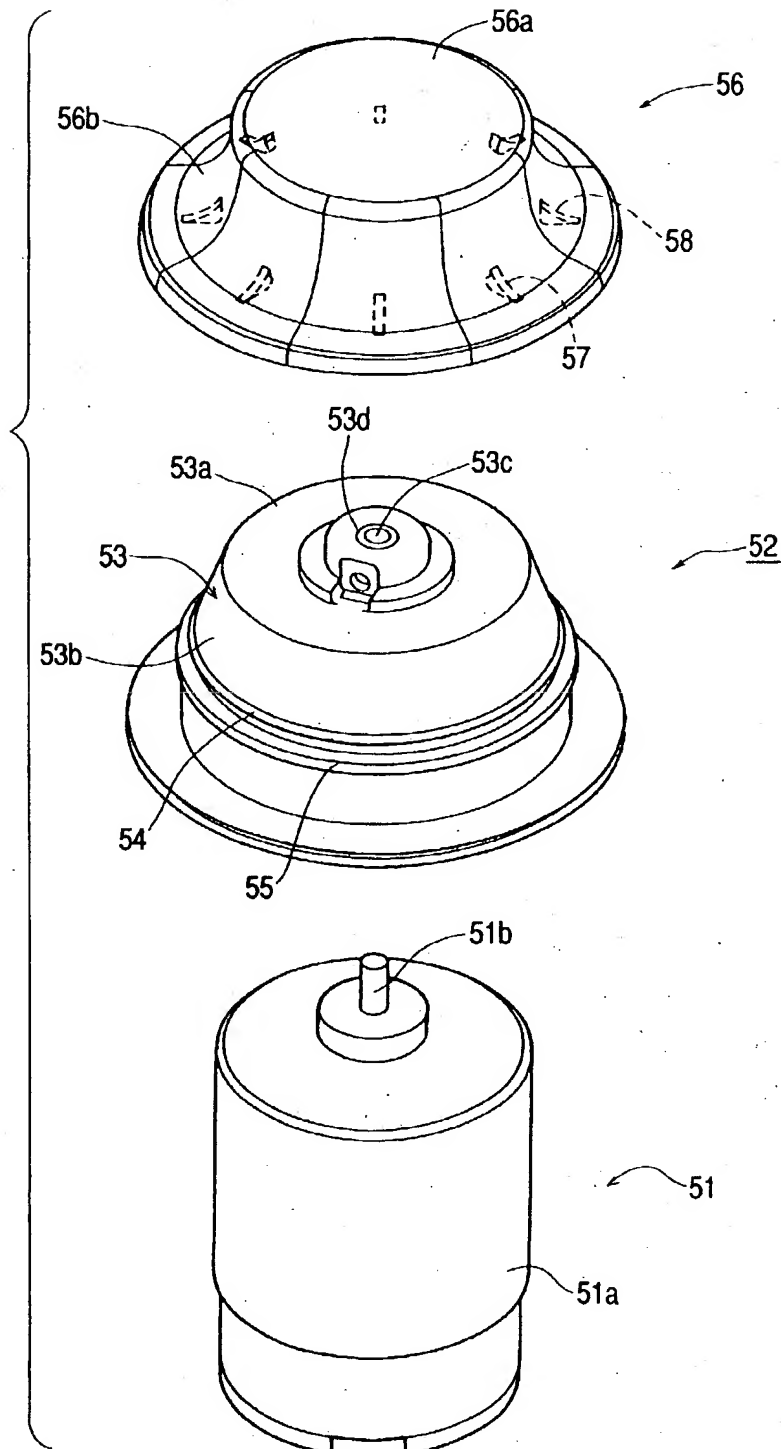


FIG. 6 PRIOR ART





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 02 00 7526

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
A	US 4 920 823 A (MOHR MICHAEL A ET AL) 1 May 1990 (1990-05-01) * column 3, line 43 - column 5, line 19 * * figures 3-5 *	1,4-6, 11,14	G05G1/10
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
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Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 14 June 2002	Examiner J. Giráldez Sánchez
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14-06-2002

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